

Functional Food and Drink - UK - September 2011

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“If manufacturers can provide assurance about their claims, while targeting innovation to the specific needs of elderly people, the functional food and drink market could engage this profitable and expanding demographic.”

– Alex Becket, Senior Food Analyst

In this report we answer the key questions:

- How can manufacturers combat consumer scepticism toward functional foods?
- How will EFSA's stricter requirements for functional food and drinks affect the operators in the functional market?
- How can manufacturers better engage the growing ageing population?
- What opportunities does the 16-24-year old demographic offer the functional food market?

Definition

Scientifically functional foods and drinks have been defined as: “affecting beneficially one or more target functions in the body beyond adequate nutritional effects in a way that is relevant to either an improved state of health and well-being and/or reduction of risk of disease” (British Journal of Nutrition, 1999).

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) defines functional foods as “one claiming to have additional benefits other than nutritional value, for example a margarine that contains a cholesterol-lowering ingredient”.

Mintel defines functional food and drinks as products which claim to have added health benefits beyond their nutritional value. They claim to have a positive, beneficial effect on the body in general, or on a particular function of the body. In addition to key ingredients, the product must also claim to have a beneficial effect on the body or body function such as: lowering cholesterol, improving the heart, aiding digestion or beauty benefits. The product also needs to be specifically scientifically formulated, fortified or enriched with the ingredients to provide the health benefits – for example, salmon that is naturally rich in omegas and claims to aid the heart is not a functional product, since the omegas were not added to the product.

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